Claims

1   1.   An extension for extending a Messaging Application Programming Interface (MAPI)
2   client for operation with a MAPI server across a network, comprising:
3   an interface for integrating with the MAPI client; and
4   a communication initiator for causing the MAPI client to initiate a communications
5 session from the MAPI client to the MAPI server, wherein the communications session allows
6 for communication between the MAPI client and the MAPI server.

1   2.   The extension of claim 1 wherein the communication between the MAPI client
2 and the MAPI server comprises notification of new electronic mail messages.

1   3.   The extension of claim 1 wherein the communication between the MAPI client
2 and the MAPI server comprises communication of new electronic mail messages.

1   4.   The extension of claim 1 wherein the communication between the MAPI client
2 and the MAPI server comprises communication of at least one of calendar items, task items,
3 information about calendar items, information about task items, or some combination.

1   5.   The extension of claim 1 wherein the initiator initiates the communications
2 session upon the occurrence on an event.

    6.   The extension of claim 5 wherein the event comprises a mouse movement.

    7.   The extension of claim 6 wherein the event comprises selection of a menu item.

1   8.   The extension of claim 1 wherein the initiator periodically initiates a
2 communications session.

1   9.   The extension of claim 8 wherein the initiator comprises a timer for periodically
2 initiating a communications session.

1   10.   The extension of claim 9 wherein the initiator comprises a timer for periodically
2 initiating a communications session at a predetermined time interval.

1   11.   The extension of claim 10 further comprising a user interface for facilitating
2 configuration of the predetermined time interval by a user of the MAPI client.

1   12.   The extension of claim 1 wherein the MAPI client comprises a MICROSOFT
2 OFFICE software application.

1   13.   The extension of claim 12 wherein the MAPI client comprises MICROSOFT
2 OUTLOOK.

1   14.   The extension of claim 13 wherein the MAPI server comprises MICROSOFT

2   EXCHANGE.

1   15.   The extension of claim 1 wherein the MAPI server comprises MICROSOFT

2   EXCHANGE.

1   16.   The extension of claim 1 wherein the network comprises a gateway located

2   between a first network and a second network, and wherein the gateway implements at least one

3   of network address translation (NAT) and port address translation (PAT).

1   17.   The extension of claim 1 wherein the network comprises a gateway connecting a

2   first network and a second network, and wherein the server is in communication with the first

3   network and wherein the client is in communication with the second network, and wherein the

4   gateway prevents communication initiation from the server to the client.

        18.   The extension of claim 1 wherein the gateway comprises a firewall.

        19.   A method for extending a Messaging Application Programming Interface (MAPI)

client for operation with a MAPI server across a network, comprising the steps of:

    providing an extension to the MAPI client; and

    initiating by the extension a communications session from the MAPI client to the MAPI

server, wherein the communications session allows for communication between the MAPI client

and the MAPI server.

        20.   The method of claim 19 wherein the communications session is initiated

repeatedly by the extension.

1   21.   The method of claim 19 wherein the communication between the MAPI client and

2   the MAPI server comprises notification of new electronic mail messages.

1   22.   The method of claim 19 wherein the communication between the MAPI client and

2   the MAPI server comprises communication of new electronic mail messages.

1   23.   The method of claim 19 wherein the communication between the MAPI client and

2   the MAPI server comprises communication of at least one of calendar items, task items,

3   information about calendar items, information about task items, or some combination.

1   24.   The method of claim 19 wherein the step of initiating is performed in response to

2   the occurrence of an event.

1   25.   The method of claim 24 wherein the event comprises a mouse movement.

1   26.   The method of claim 24 wherein the event comprises selection of a menu item.

1   27.   The method of claim 19 wherein the step of initiating is performed periodically.

1   28.   The method of claim 27 wherein the step of initiating is performed periodically at
2   a predetermined time interval.

1   29.   The method of claim 28, further comprising the step of facilitating configuration
2   of the predetermined time interval by a user of the MAPI client via a user interface.

1   30.   The method of claim 19 wherein the MAPI client comprises a MICROSOFT
2   OFFICE software application.

1   31.   The method of claim 30 wherein the MAPI client comprises MICROSOFT
2   OUTLOOK.

1   32.   The method of claim 31 wherein the MAPI server comprises MICROSOFT
2   EXCHANGE.

1   33.   The method of claim 19 wherein the MAPI server comprises MICROSOFT
2   EXCHANGE.

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1   34.   The method of claim 19 wherein the network comprises a gateway connecting a
2   first network and a second network, and wherein the gateway implements at least one of network
3   address translation (NAT) and port address translation (PAT).

1   35.   The method of claim 19 wherein the network comprises a gateway connecting a
2   first network and a second network, and wherein the server is in communication with the first
3   network and wherein the client is in communication with the second network, and wherein the
4   gateway prevents communication initiation from the server to the client.

1   36.   The method of claim 35 wherein the gateway comprises a firewall.

1   37.   An extension for extending an electronic mail client application running on a
2   computer connected to a first network for operation with a electronic mail server running on a
3   computer connected to a second network, the network comprising a gateway connecting the first
4   network and the second network, wherein the gateway prevents notification of new electronic
5   mail messages from the electronic mail server to the electronic mail client, comprising:

6   an electronic mail client application interface subsystem for integrating with the

7   electronic mail client; and

8   a communication initiation subsystem for causing the electronic mail client to initiate a

9   communications session from the electronic mail client to the electronic mail server, wherein the

10   communications session allows for information relating to new electronic mail messages

11   received at the server to be communicated from the electronic mail server to the electronic mail

12   client.